

Everyday-Life Vocabulary: A Missing Component in Iranian EFL Context

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Abstract : This study aimed at investigating any difference between Iranian senior high school students' performance on Academic Words (AWs) and Everyday-Life Words (ELWs). To this end, in the first phase, a number of 120 male senior high school students were randomly selected from among twelve high schools in Gachsaran to serve as the participants of the study. In the second phase, using purposive sampling, six high school teachers holding an MA in TEFL and with over twenty years of teaching experience were interviewed. Two multiple-choice tests, each comprising 40 items, were given to the participants in order to determine their performance on AWs and ELWs and follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers' opinions about participants' performance on the two tests. To analyze the data, a paired-samples t-test was carried out to compare the results of both tests and the interviews were also transcribed to pinpoint important themes. The results of the t-test indicated that the participants performed significantly better on AWs than on ELWs. Additionally, results of the interviews boiled down to the fact that the English textbooks designed for Iranian high school students are fundamentally flawed on the grounds that there is a mismatch between students' real language learning needs and what is presented to them as "teaching-to-the-test" materials via these books. Finally, the implications and suggestions for further research are discussed.

Keywords : everyday-life words, academic words, textbooks, washback

Conference Title : ICFLTAL 2015 : International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : January 19-20, 2015